

by Bob Saydowski, Jr.



Model 5

In the July '82 issue of MD, I reviewed practice pad kits by three manufacturers. These were actually practice drumsets, as they all used a drum head as their playing surface. Ralph Pace's models are true practice *pad* kits, using a wooden base and rubber surface. He currently has 28 kit models as well as 13 other special-purpose pads—all hand-made.

Pure tan gum rubber is used for the playing surface, which can range from 6" to 16" in diameter. The pad bases are poplar, plywood discs with a wooden post on the bottom. This mount post has five holes and attaches via a wing bolt and curved washer through one hole. For extra stability, small screws are provided which can be countersunk into an additional hole. All parts are finished in polyurethane varnish.

All kit models include a square particle-board base. An upright bass drum post screws into the baseboard and has a brace on the back. The base drum pad is a square piece of thick, cushioned rubber, tacked onto the wooden post. At the bottom of the post is a steel plate for pedal mounting. It's adjustable to accommodate most pedals.

The baseboard also serves as a platform for all other pad mounts. The snare and floor tom pads are on separate, fixed wooden posts, which are screwed into the baseboard. These posts are actually two-piece. Another wood post mounts on the side of the fixed post, and this is where the pad attaches. This adjustable post has holes which allow the post to be adjusted for height and forward tilt. The pads can also tilt towards the player due to their swivel-type mount, but distance between the two is fixed. The posts may also be strengthened by adding countersunk screws.

The tom-tom and/or ride cymbal pads are mounted on wood crossbars which attach to the backside of the bass drum post. The bars are adjustable for spread and height. The top of each crossbar is cut at an angle to allow proper pad mounting. Pace attaches sandpaper strips to the angle cut to give a better grip. One of the crosspieces is longer than the other to allow for making the right tom into a ride cymbal. The two mounted pads can be tilted towards the player, but not towards each other. The same goes for the snare and floor tom.

Pace's *Model #5 Pro Standard* duplicates a five drum set-up and is comprised of two 13" pads for snare and floor tom and two 11" pads for the left and right toms. The bass drum post is made of a thick 3 1/2" x 4" rubber block. The baseboard measures 20" x 14". Retail \$120.00

The *Model #6 Pro Standard* is a double bass set-up utilizing a larger baseboard, two separate bass drum posts with one tom-tom pad mounted on each post and separate snare and floor tom posts. Distances between the two bass drum posts, as well as between the snare and floor tom, are fixed, but one could customize the set by drilling new holes for different post placements. Retail: \$135.00.

All of Ralph Pace's practice sets can be ordered with a *Circular Heavy Duty Bass Drum Pad* affixed to the upright post. This pad is a 17" diameter piece of plywood with the rubber block attached. A plastic molding surrounds the edge of the pad, giving it a more realistic bass drum appearance.

Pace also offers *Deluxe Heavy Duty* models. The swivel base under each plywood pad disc is twice the size of the *Standard* models. There is a formica piece between the rubber and the wood to further reduce sound. The wood discs themselves are 3/4" thick and all pads have plastic edge moldings.

Also available are *Double-Mount-Reversible* models. Pace's idea of a reversible pad allows for the playing surface to be detached from the pad mount, leaving one disc base still on the pad set. Each pad has

two plywood bases. The pad surface which was removed can be placed on your drum-set for practicing. Basically, two sets of pads are available with the double-mount-reversible system.

A special, brush playing surface pad can be ordered to replace the regular snare drum pad on any set model. The surface is textured formica and gives quite a different sound. The surface is ideal for practicing with brushes.

Two student models are made in four-and five-piece set-ups. They have 6" rubber pads mounted on hexagonal wood bases. The same mounting idea applies. These models are the lowest price of all manufacturers, retailing at only \$65.00 (*Model #4*) and \$75.00 (*Model 4T*).

All pad models are very quiet and have a solid sound and feel. I found the toms all have some sort of inherent pitch. As you go around the set, the pitch of each pad lowers, just like drums on a regular kit. The snare pad is quieter than the toms due to its 1/4" rubber, as compared to 3/16" on the tom-tom surfaces.

Besides practice pad sets, Ralph Pace has various other pads to offer: The *Model #1* is simply the bass drum upright post and baseboard from a pad set. This model could be helpful for the student who already has a practice pad and stand, but needs something to duplicate a bass drum. Retail: \$15.00.

For those who want to practice on their own drumset, the *Model #8 Pro Silent Bass Drum Practice Pad* fits onto the batter head. The same square rubber cushion that is used on the pad kits is used here and mounted on an 8 1/2" wide piece of plywood which spans the height of the drum. It's held on by the drum pedal at the bottom, and at the top by any standard cowbell holder clamp. A set screw is provided for more secure anchoring, if needed. \$15.00.

For the rest of your drumset, various sized 3/4" thick pads will fit atop the batter heads. These have the plastic edge molding, and are designed for the drummer with a kit set up for practice, who requires

Set-The-Pace Practice Pads



minimum of noise. The pads are available in 12" to 16" diameters and can also be used as stand-mounted practice pads. Variations of Model #14, the 14" pad, give different pitches and volumes depending on the thickness of the rubber used. \$10.00 to \$20.00.

The right tom on any of the pad kits may be replaced with a ride cymbal pad, which uses thinner rubber and a thinner base than the drum pads. But, if you want to use your own cymbals, Pace has silencers for ride cymbals and hi-hats. Both are made of thin, floppy black rubber. The ride cymbal silencer has a large hole cut out to fit over the cymbal, leaving the bell exposed and is held on with metal spring clips. The pad totally deadens the cymbal, but gives ample stick rebound for fast patterns. The hi-hat silencer fits on the top rod of your hi-hat stand and is placed between the two cymbals. When playing the hi-hat with your foot, this pad deadens the "chick," making the hi-hat practically soundless. The hi-hat silencer is available in 12" to 15" diameters and retails at \$8.00. The ride cymbal model is available for cymbals 16" to 22". Retail \$9.00.

Ralph Pace was first on the scene with practice pad sets and offers the largest selection by far. All models are made to order, handmade by Ralph himself.

Most models come fully assembled. The large playing surfaces give a great drumset simulation. While perhaps not as compact and portable as the Remo, Calato, and Pearl pads, Ralph Pace's practice pad sets offer good quality, silent sound, and best of all in today's economy, down-to-earth prices.

All models are available direct, or can be found in select music shops. For more information: Ralph C. Pace, Box 63, North White Plains, NY 10603.

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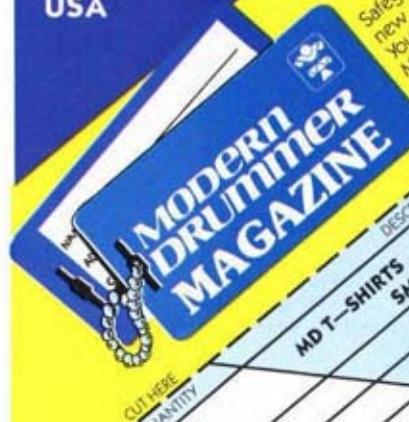
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